The ISLAND of REGENERATION

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SYNOPSIS.

A young woman cast ashore on a lonely island, finds a solitary inhabitant, a young white man, dressed like a savage and unable to speak in any known language. She decides to educate him and mold his mind to her own ideals. She finds evidence that leads her to believe that the man is John Revell Charnock of Virginia, and that he was cast ashore when a child. Katharine Brenton was a specialized product of a leading university. Her writings on the sex problem attracted wide attention. The son of a multi-millionaire becomes infatuated with her and they decide to put her theories into practice. With no other ceremony than a handshake, they go away together. A few days on his yacht reveals to her that he only professed lofty ideals to possess her. While drunk he attempts to kiss her. She knocks him down and leaves him unconscious, escaping in the darkness in a gasoline launch. During a storm she is cast ashore on an island. Three years' teaching gives the man a splendid education. Their love for each other is revealed when he rescues her from a cave where she had been imprisoned by an earthquake. A ship is sighted and they light a beacon to summon it. Langford, on his yacht, sights the beacon and orders his yacht put in. The woman recognizes the yacht and tells her companion that a man on board had injured her in the greatest way. Langford recognizes Katharine. He tells the man that she had been his mistress, and narrowly escapes being killed. An American cruiser appears. Officers hear the whole story and Langford asks Katharine to marry him.

CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

"I can answer that," said the woman. "When I landed on this island, I found this man here. He had been here a long time. I believe he had been cast away here as a child and had grown up alone. He had no speech or language. He had no memory of the past. His mind was a blank. I was glad to find him here. He gave me occupation, companionship. I had been well educated. I determined to teach him. I knew that his ignorance was the result of his environment. I believed him to be naturally acute. I found my beliefs warranted. I taught him all that I could of life and letters from memory. For three years my sole and only occupation has been to teach him what I knew. No preceptor ever had apter or more docile pupil."

"No learner ever sat at the feet of such a teacher," cried the man, touched by the recollection. "Think, men, all that I knew was a childish babble of prayers which had remained in my memory. I was ignorant of everything, even that I myself existed; that there was any difference between me and the palm tree or yonder bird; that man was made in the image of his God; that there was such a thing as a woman upon earth. I had no ideas of honor or honesty, or purity, or sweetness, or truth, or life, or God, until she taught me. I believed in her as I believed in God, and I loved her as I love sunlight and fresh air and the sweet wind. I loved her, as I learned to love under her teaching, goodness and truth and every virtue. And to think, to think, to think—" he threw up his hands in a wild gesture—"that it has come to this."

"And he taught me something, Mr. Whittaker," said the woman. "He gave me back my faith in manhood which you—" she swept Langford with a bitter glance—"had destroyed. He gave me back, I think, my faith in God. He taught me many things. And then two days ago an earthquake burst within the cave I call home, and he tore the rocks asunder and freed me and caught me in his arms, I knew that he had taught me what love was, and as he confessed before you all that he loved me, that he did love me, I will confess the same, and say that I at least have not changed in this hour."

"Kate, Kate!" cried Langford, "for God's sake, think of what you say and do!"

"Sir," said Whittaker, turning to the man of the island, "you are a very fortunate man."

"Of all on earth," was the bitter answer, "I cannot think there are any more miserable than I."

"Did you learn nothing of his past, Miss Brenton?" asked Whittaker, uncomfortably, unable to answer this strange yet natural assertion. "Could the man remember nothing?"

"He learned a great deal," returned the woman. "In the cave which he had made his home and which he has since yielded up to me—"

"Where is this cave?"

"On the other side of the island. You shall see it presently. I found a Bible. There was a date in it some 30 years back and a name in it."

"What is the name?"

"John Ravell Charnock."

"Of Virginia?" asked Whittaker, eagerly.

"I think so, although there was nothing but the name and the date in the Bible."

"I know Charnocks in Virginia. They come from Nansemond county."

"It is a further confirmation," said the woman. "With the Bible there was a little silver box containing a flint and steel by means of which—" she turned to Langford—"we lighted that beacon which brought you here this morning."

"It was my own eye caught the signal," answered Langford.

"Would God I had died ere I gave it up to her!" in posed the man.

"I insisted upon it. So soon as I realized this man loved me, I told him I had a story to tell. I knew it would bring sadness to his heart. I wanted him to hear the voice of the world in comment upon my relation, and I knew he would find it on yonder ship."

"I was happy," said the man, "to go on as we were. I should not have lighted that fire."

"Pray continue with your story, Miss Brenton," said the lieutenant commander. "I am deeply interested in it. There is a great Charnock estate in Virginia which has been held for 30 years or more by the last survivor of the ancient family. And I remember some romantic story connected with it, too."

"The silver box that inclosed the flint and steel," continued the woman, "was marked 'J. R. C.' Exploring the island I came upon the remains of a boat, and any of you may examine it. Near the boat in yonder coppice there were two skeletons, one of a woman and the other of a dog. I excavated the boat, found that it had belonged to the ship Nansemond of Virginia. I have the stern pieces with the name painted on it in my cave. I put the skeletons of the dog and the woman in the boat and filled it up again with sand. There they lie waiting Christian burial. The place where they had died, the woman and her dog, I carefully inspected. Everything but metal, and most of that, had rusted away, but I found two rings." She stretched forth her hand. "They are here." She stripped them off. "One of them is a wedding ring. You see it is marked." She read the markings off, "J. R. C. to M. P. T. September 10, 1869, II. Cor. xii, 15. The verse of Scripture to which reference is made is 'I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.' There was a piece of silver, also, which had evidently been part of a dog's collar. It, too, was marked: 'John Revell Charnock—His Dog, July 22-1875.' And that was all."

"Do you remember nothing of your early life, nothing whatever, sir?" asked Whittaker, turning to the man.

"I have a dim recollection of some sort of a sea happening, of a long voyage with a woman and some kind of an animal in an open boat, of horrible sufferings, of a few words of prayer; that is all."

"I think that this man, then a child," resumed the woman, "and his mother must in some way have been involved in a shipwreck, and that she and her son and a dog must have been cast away on this island; that the woman died and the child survived. There is nothing here that would in any way harm him and his life and growth under such circumstances and conditions are quite possible. He had probably seen his mother read that Bible. He carried it with him, put it in that cave and forgot it with the flint and steel in the silver box of which he would have no knowledge and which he could not use. The dog probably lived some time and when he died crawled back to where his mistress lay and gave up his life at her feet. And therefore I believe this man's name to be John Revell Charnock; that he is an American, and that he came from Virginia. I know him to be a Christian and a gentleman. In all the days that we have been together on this island he has done me no wrong. He has been gentleness, kindness, docility itself, and despite ourselves we have learned to love each other. Until yesterday we did not know it. Now it is for him to say what we will do."

"Kate, Kate," cried Langford, "you cannot let this untutored savage—"

"Not that," said the woman, "for I have taught him all I know and all I believe."

"You cannot let him decide this question," continued the man, passing over her interruption.

"Yes," said the woman, "he must decide, but whatever he decides, whatever the relationship between this man and this woman is to be, I can never be anything on earth to you."

"Don't say that," said Whittaker. "Think, my dear lady, what you do, what this man offers you, the position in which—God forgive me!—you stand."

"Sir," said the woman, addressing the lieutenant commander, "this man wronged me grievously, terribly. He deceived me. He broke my heart. He killed ambition, aspiration and respect for my own kind within my soul. I know him through and through. The fact that he failed quickened his passion; the fact that men say I am beautiful made him the more eager; the fact that he was away and that he could not lay his hands upon me made him the more insistent; the fact that I had flaunted him and said him nay and struck him down made him the more determined."

"Kate, Kate, you wrong me. Before God you wrong me!" interrupted Langford.

"And indeed, madam, I believe you do," commented Whittaker.

"Let her speak on," said the man of the island.

"It may be that you are right," continued the woman. "It may be that he is higher, nobler, truer than I have fancied. I should be glad to be able to think so. I am willing to take your view of it, his assertion of it, but I do not love him. Should I marry him, I would bring to him a heart, a soul, a body that turns to some one else. He could never be anything to me. As I am a Christian woman, a lover of my God and a follower of his Son, I cannot see but that I would be adding one wrong to another to come to

"No Christian Ever Believed in His God as I Believed in Her."

this man in compliance with any suggestion of the world, following any dictate of society, subservient to any convention. I cannot see but that I would be doing as great or a greater wrong than I did before in flaunting all of these forces. I have learned what love is and what marriage should be. I will not give my hand and yield up my person where I cannot yield my heart. And there is no expiation or reparation that requires it of me, no voice that can coerce me into it. I will not marry you, Valentine Langford. I will accept your expressions as evidenced by your words, by your presence here, as testimony to your regret. Indeed, I realize that your confession was itself a great humiliation to a man like you. And perhaps I have spoken harshly of it. But the bare fact remains, I do not love you, I could not love you, I don't even want to love you. My heart, my soul goes to this man," she turned to her companion of the island, "whom up to to-day I have made and fashioned and taught and trained until these hours when he has broken away from me. I love this man who stands silent, who thinks of me as a thing spotted, polluted, damned. Him I love, though he slay me, yet will I love him. Him I trust, though he disobey me, yet will I love him. Him I will serve, though he cast me off, yet will I love him. And with this in my heart in which I glory and which I confess as openly and with as little hesitation as you confessed your shame, I give you my final, absolute, utterly irrevocable decision. I will not marry you, I will not go back with you. No, not for anything that you can proffer, nor for any reason that you can urge, will I come to you when in my soul I belong to another. There may be no end to this but my despair. This man may cast me off. This man may trample me under foot. The spots upon my soul may loom larger in his view and hide what else is there. I know I have been forgiven by God, I will not be forgiven by men, but I tell you here and now, again and again, that I will not be your wife. I will be his wife or no man's."

Langford turned away and hid his face in his hands. Whittaker stepped forward and laid his hand upon the shoulder of the man of the island. He shook him for a moment.

"You stand immobile," he cried, sharply, "after such a confession as that, after such an appeal? What have you to say, man? You ought to get down on your knees and thank God for the love of such a woman."

"Aye, aye," burst out the deep tones of the old coxswain of the cutter. "So say all of us."

"God help me," cried the man, lifting his hand and releasing his shoulder from the grasp of the officer, "I did love this woman. Think how it was, think how I believed in her. No Christian ever believed in his god as I believed in her. She told me what purity was, what innocence was, what sweetness was, what light was, what truth was, and I looked at her and saw them."

"And you can look at her and see them now," cried the officer.

"No," said the man, "I can never look at her and see her the same."

"Oh, Man! Man!" cried the woman.

The test was upon him. He was failing. Her sorrow, her grief were more for him than for herself.

"Don't mistake me," said the man. "I can't help loving you, whatever you are. If you had been as guilty as, when he began to speak and when you corroborated him, I fancied that you were, I should have loved you just the same and I should have married you, and I shall marry you. This . . . this awful thing has come between us, but we will try in some way to live it down, to forget it, to go on as we were."

He stepped toward the woman.

She drew herself up to her full height and looked him unflinchingly in the face.

"No," she said, "we are not going on as we thought. We will not marry and live together. We will not bury this wretched happening in the past in any oblivion. I will marry no man, although he may have my whole heart, who is not proud and glad to take me, who does not realize that I am as pure and as innocent of wrong and shame as he would fain think his mother, as he would absolutely know his wife must be. I told you that your manhood must be put to the test. I told you that your love must be tried by fire. What I loved in you was the assurance that you would survive the test, that you would triumph in the trial. It is not I that have been before the great judge this morning, but you, and you have failed."

"Kate," said Langford, "he casts you off; take me. I swear to you that were I in his place, I would not have hesitated a moment."

"I respect you more than ever," said the woman; "but I don't love you and I cannot, I will not take you!"

"Charnock," said Whittaker, "if that's your name, permit me to say here, saving the lady's presence, that you are behaving like a damned fool."

The man looked at him dumbly, uncomprehendingly, and made no reply. It was the woman who spoke, coldly, impartially. She had seemingly dismissed the whole affair, though at what a cost to herself no one could know.

"Sir," she said, "is there anyone on your ship empowered to administer an oath?"

"I have that power," answered the lieutenant-commander. "Why do you ask?"

"I wish you would bring some of your officers here with paper and ink. I wish to make a deposition as to the facts that I have learned concerning this man which may be of service to him in establishing his identity and discovering his history when he returns to the United States."

"But are you not going back with us, Miss Brenton?" asked the officer in amazement. "We are sailing for Honolulu and thence for San Francisco as directly as we can go."

"No," said the girl, "I will not leave the island. You can take my friend here."

"The Southern Cross," said Langford, "is at your disposal, Kate."

"I have had one voyage upon her," said the woman bitterly. "I want never to see her again."

"Woman," said the man of the island suddenly, "if you stay here, I stay here. Without you I will not go."

"Not so," said the woman scornfully. "I would not be upon the same island alone with you again. You have failed me."

Her voice broke, but she caught it again instantly and resumed her iron self-control.

"Then if one of us must stay, it shall be I."

"No," said the woman. "I have been in the world and you have not. You may go and learn what it holds for you. I have tried to prepare you, to give you lessons. Now, you may put them in practice."

"The island is mine," said the man. "I was here when you came. I shall be here when you return."

"We shall see," returned the woman looking boldly at him. The clash of wills almost struck fire within the eyes of the two who thus crossed swords. "Meanwhile," she turned to Langford, "if you will leave the island and go back to your ship, I shall be very glad. There is nothing you can do here. You have nothing to gain by remaining."

"Kate," he cried, "one last appeal."

"It is as unavailing as the first."

She looked at him steadily. He saw that within her face and bearing which convinced him that what she said was true.

"At least," he said, with the dignity of sorrow and disappointment, "if I have played the part of the fool, I have done my best to play the man."

He turned slowly away. In a step the woman was by his side.

"You have," she said. "Whoever else has failed me in this hour, it has not been you. I am sorry that I do not love you, that I never did love you and that I cannot love you." She reached her hand out. "Good-by."

"Good-by," he said, "if you think of me, remember that I did my best to make amends and if you ever change—"

"I shall not change," said the woman. "Good-by."

He moved off down the strand, called his sailors to him, got into his boat, shoved off and was rowed over the blue lagoon and through the opening in the barrier toward the yacht tossing slowly upon the long swells of the Pacific.

"As for you, sir," said the woman, after she had watched Langford a little while in silence, "will you go back and bring some officers ashore to hear my story?"

"At your wish, Miss Brenton," said the lieutenant-commander gravely.

The woman turned to her companion.

"Will you go with them?"

"And leave you here alone?" cried the man.

"I shall be here when you come back, I give you my word upon it. I do not break my word. You know whatever else you may have against me, I have always told you the truth. If you will remember, I said but yesterday that I was not worthy of you."

She smiled bitterly.

"And in that, madam," said Whittaker, "give me leave to say that you broke your record for veracity."

"'Tis good of you to say so," she returned. "Believe me I have taken more comfort from your words and actions in this dreadful hour than I had dreamed it possible for men to give. Now, if you will all go away and leave me and not come back until evening I shall be so glad and thankful."

"Come, sir," said the lieutenant-commander, not unkindly, touching the man upon the shoulder. "As a gentleman you cannot do less than accede to the lady's request."

Suffering himself thus to be persuaded, the man followed the officer into the boat, in which the whole party embarked and was rowed away from the island. His first touch with the world had separated him from the woman he loved and who loved him. Nay, his own frightful folly, his own blindness, his own criminal and heartless decision had done that. And the world upon which humanity loves to load the blame of its transgressions, and with which it would fain share the consequences of its own follies, had nothing whatever to do with it. In fact, it was because he was so ignorant of the world, so utterly unable to see things in their relative values—and in relation we ascertain truth—that he had taken the tone that he had used and entered upon the course which he had followed.

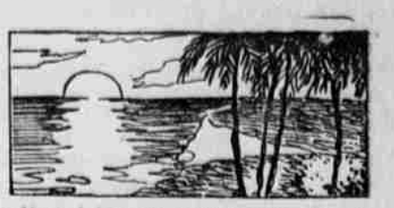
He could only see one thing, that this woman who he supposed belonged so completely and entirely and absolutely to him, who was as fresh and unspotted from the world as he was, who had been his own as he had belonged entirely and utterly and absolutely to her, was—different! That the difference was more in his own imagination than anywhere else brought him no comfort. He still loved her, he still wanted to marry her, but he loved her in spite of her shame. A greater, a wiser man would have loved her because of it. And some day this fact which he himself was inherently large enough to realize, or would be after a time, would cause him a grief so great that the anguish that he suffered now would be nothing.

Whittaker was a man of great tact and shrewdness and one with a wide knowledge of the world. He realized something of what was in the man's mind. He saw in some measure how the proposition presented itself to him and he felt a deep kindness and pity toward his unhappy fellow passenger.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Divided.

The best thing on earth for a man in the islander's position would have been isolation and a chance to think it over. The worst thing on earth for a woman in Katharine's position was isolation and a chance to think it over. If the man had been enabled by lack of outside interests to give free rein to his thoughts and let them draw him whither they would, he might have arrived at a different viewpoint, whence he could have enjoyed a sight of the affair in all its bearings and could have



adjusted himself to them, but the opportunity he needed he did not get. He was immediately plunged into an atmosphere of such strangeness to him, filled with such compelling necessity for attention, that, although he loathed the necessity thus imposed upon him, he was constrained to take part in the life that flowed around him. His instinct—and he was almost a woman in his instinctive capacity—was to be alone, but it was impossible, and in spite of himself what he saw distracted him. The people he met did more.

Whittaker hustled him below, of course, as soon as possible and took him into his own cabin. Fortunately they were men of much the same height and build, although the islander was the more graceful, symmetric and strong, and he succeeded in getting him into a civilian suit of clothing for which he had no present use. There were both loss and gain in his appearance. There was no gain in the islander's feelings, at least, he thought not, in view of the irksome restraint of clothing, and yet there was a certain satisfaction to his soul in being no longer singled out from among his fellows by the strangeness of his apparel. As clothes the garments became him, and it all depended upon your point of view as to whether you preferred the handsome barbarian with a hint of civilization in his carriage, or the civilized gentleman with a suggestion of the barbaric in his bearing. Whittaker reasoned rightly that the sooner he became accustomed to these things the better, and that the time to begin was immediately.

He had had a hasty word or two with the captain before he took him below, and when he was dressed—and it required assistance from the lieutenant-commander ere the unfamiliar habiliments were properly adjusted—the two passed from the ward room to the cabin of the captain in the after part of the ship.

The few sentences in which Whittaker had made his brief report to his superior had in a measure prepared the captain for the more lengthy discourse that followed, and, feeling that the situation was one which required more than the simple authority of the master of a ship, he had summoned to conference the surgeon and the chaplain. It was to these three men, therefore, that Whittaker and the islander presented themselves.

The chaplain, like Whittaker, was a Virginian. He had not noted the islander's face when he came aboard in his semi-savage garb, but as his eye dwelt upon him standing clothed and in his right mind before him he gave a start of surprise, and so soon as the formal salutations had been exchanged, with a word to the captain for permission, he asked Whittaker a question.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Whittaker, but what is this gentleman's name?"

The word gentleman was used naturally and unconsciously, with an absolute sense of its fitness, as everyone in the cabin could perceive.

"It is not rightly known," said Whittaker, "but he is believed to be a Virginian of the—"

"I knew it," said the chaplain, impulsively; "he is one of the Charnocks of Nansemond county."

"Your recognition, chaplain," said the lieutenant-commander, eagerly, "will be of great value in determining this stranger's name and station. The evidence of it is circumstantial. I do not know how it will be regarded in a court of law."

"I have always understood that the Charnock estate was a vast one," said Capt. Ashby, "and since coal has been mined on the Virginia lands it has become very valuable."

"It is true," answered the chaplain. "Who holds it now?" asked the surgeon.

"It is held by an old man, my friend of many years' standing, the brother of John Revell Charnock."

"I believe that to be my name," said the islander.

"I have little doubt of it," replied the chaplain, continuing. "The first John Revell Charnock was lost at sea. He and his wife and young child some 30 years ago set forth on a voyage around the world for her health. The ship, in which I believe he had some ownership, was called the Nansemond. Its course was traced as far as Valparaiso, thence it sailed for the Philippines and was never heard of again. I know the story," said the chaplain, turning toward the captain, "because John Revell Charnock was one of my best friends, as is his brother, Philip Norton Charnock, who now holds the estate."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Often Too Many Pictures.

Attention was called to the fact that there are no pictures on the walls of the house of Mark Twain, in which his daughter was recently married to the Russian pianist, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, because the author thinks that the natural pictures framed by the casements are much more beautiful than any artificial ones can be. The trouble with most houses is that there are too many pictures, and this is especially often the case where the natural beauty of the landscape ought not to be disregarded.